

David Bartlett

Education & Public Sector Consultant | Digital, AI & Learner Engagement

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Profile

Founder and operator with a decade in UK education technology, now offering consultancy to education providers, public sector bodies and EdTech startups. I help organisations engage learners, automate manual processes and apply AI and digital advice in ways that reduce workload and improve outcomes.

I built and scaled Purlos, an EdTech SaaS reaching £1.2m ARR (20% growth, 30% EBITDA, under 10% churn), and sold a majority stake in 2024. I work across the full learner journey: conversation and enrolment, learner engagement (especially WhatsApp), destinations and outcomes tracking, alumni and careers support. My clients are FE colleges, universities, training providers, councils and combined authorities.

How I Help Clients

Learner engagement & communications

- Design and deploy WhatsApp and conversational engagement that reaches learners on the channels they actually use, lifting enrolment, attendance and retention.
- Build authentic learner journeys from first enquiry through conversion, reducing drop-out and freeing admissions and student services teams.

Automation & reducing client workload

- Automate manual, repetitive processes (data collection, surveys, destinations tracking) so staff focus on the learners who need them most.
- Identify where AI and digital tooling cut cost and effort, then scope and deliver practical, low-risk implementations.

AI & digital advice

- Advise leadership on where AI genuinely adds value in education and public services, and where it does not, with honest assessment of risk and ROI.
- Translate digital transformation strategy into deliverable steps for non-technical teams.

Outcomes, destinations & data

- Capture and analyse destinations and outcomes data to support Ofsted readiness, course quality improvement and funding cases.
- Stand up alumni and careers support programmes that extend the learner relationship beyond graduation.

Experience

Founder & CEO, Purlos | London, UK

2018 – present (majority stake sold 2024)

- Founded and scaled an EdTech SaaS to £1.2m ARR with 20% growth, 30% EBITDA and under 10% churn; sold a majority stake in 2024.
- Built three products spanning the learner journey: Engage (enrolment and conversion via WhatsApp), Destinations (automated outcomes tracking for Ofsted and quality), and Outcore (outcome management).
- Won and served FE colleges, universities, training providers and government clients across the UK, reaching over 100,000 prospective students a year.
- Assembled a board and advisory bench including former Pearson and Association of Colleges leadership; raised institutional seed funding.
- Led conversation design, data and AI product direction, and all early commercial growth.

Account Director, QA Learning | London, UK

2017 – 2018

- Sold consultancy-led digital and tech training programmes (£100k+), spanning skills frameworks (SFIA, IISP), learning pathways and certification routes.
- Worked key accounts including GSK, Oracle, Barclays and the Bank of England; built fluency across cloud, cyber, data and digital transformation.

Senior Business Development Manager, Nursing Times Learning (Ascential PLC) | London, UK

2013 – 2017

- Named #1 salesperson across the entire Ascential PLC group (FTSE 250) in 2015; exceeded targets three years running, delivering over £1m in mostly new revenue.
- Built deep working knowledge of NHS and government structures and funding; sold CPD learning across the public and private sector.

Business Development Manager, Pareto Law | London, UK

2010 – 2013

- Promoted twice; won new clients and assessed candidates for sales potential. Acquired by Randstad during tenure.

Core Skills

Sector: FE colleges, higher education, training providers, councils, combined authorities, EdTech and public sector startups.

Capability: Learner engagement, WhatsApp and conversational communications, enrolment and conversion, destinations and outcomes tracking, alumni and careers support, process automation, AI advisory, digital transformation, go-to-market.

Credentials: Microsoft Azure Fundamentals (certified), AWS Foundation (certified), SFIA skills framework analysis, GDPR and cyber awareness, University of Oxford (2023–24).

Why Me

I have sat in the founder's chair and the client's chair. I know what FE and public sector teams are actually measured on, where the budget comes from, and why most digital projects stall. I deliver pragmatic work that reduces effort and shows a return, not theory.

Consultancy Proposal

Digital, AI and learner engagement for education and the public sector

The problem I solve

Education providers and public sector bodies are under pressure to do more with less. Enrolment and engagement still rely on phone, email and letters that today's learners ignore. Admissions, student services and data teams are stretched on manual, repetitive work. Leaders know AI and automation should help, but lack a trusted, independent guide on what actually works and what is hype.

What I offer

Learner engagement that works. WhatsApp and conversational engagement across the full journey: enquiry, conversion, enrolment, retention, destinations, alumni and careers. Reach learners where they are and lift the numbers that matter.

Automation that frees your team. Automate data collection, surveys, destinations tracking and routine queries so staff spend time on learners, not admin.

Honest AI and digital advice. Independent assessment of where AI adds value in your context, with practical, low-risk implementation, not slideware.

Who I work with

FE colleges, universities and training providers; councils and combined authorities; and EdTech or public sector startups needing operator-level commercial and product input. UK focused.

How engagements work

- **Discovery sprint:** a fixed-scope review of your learner journey and operations, with a prioritised list of automation and engagement opportunities and expected return.
- **Delivery:** scope and stand up the priority initiatives (engagement campaigns, automation, AI pilots), hands-on or alongside your team.
- **Advisory retainer:** ongoing strategic guidance on digital, AI and growth for leadership.

Why me

I founded and scaled Purlos to £1.2m ARR (20% growth, 30% EBITDA, under 10% churn) and sold a majority stake in 2024. A decade in UK EdTech across FE, HE, training providers and government. I bring founder pragmatism and a genuine understanding of how the sector is funded and measured.

Let's talk. db@davidsbartlett.com · davidsbartlett.com